

NDIA Speaker/Panel Questions - Capt Quigley

How goes the USN-USCG "National Fleet"?

The National Fleet concept is alive and well. The Coast Guard has maintained close liaison with the U.S. Navy to develop interoperability requirements for the Deepwater acquisition project that will replace our aging cutter fleet. The new WMSL (Maritime Security Cutter Large) will be the first class to be produced, and is being designed with a full range of naval operating capabilities that will allow it to fit in with USN CSGs and ESGs. The second class, the WMSM (Maritime Security Cutter Medium) will leverage much of the work done for the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship to ensure the two classes of ship complement each other for national security operations. Finally, the Coast Guard is overhauling its 110 foot Island Class patrol boats to be more capable, and follow-on patrol boat classes will continue to be designed to fill a niche roll in coastal warfare operations that directly support COCOM requirements and homeland security needs.

In light of Sec Def Rumsfeld's "snowflakes" challenging the USCG's defense roles & missions, particularly the PSUs, what unique capabilities does the CG bring to protecting the Sea Base? How would that Sea Base mission affect USCG homeland security requirements and capabilities?

PSUs, as part of NCW organization, provide security for forward operating / staging bases (if used), MPS ports / anchorages.

WHEC's / WMSL's provide SLOC protection, HVU escort, ISR, MIO / VBSS in support of security operations (outer screen concept). Even with improved MDA available through net-centric concepts, still need eyes / hands-on to sort white traffic from potential terrorist / asymmetric threats.

LEDET's provide unique capability and experience to conduct MIO / VBSS ops when deployed from USN or allied vessels. Significant expertise detecting secreted cargoes that might pose threat to joint forces. Also have a limited ability to train USN / coalition naval forces on boarding operations.

WPB's provide close-in protection for sea base units, screening out litany of small vessels usually present in littorals...fishing vessels, coastal trade, curious onlookers (inner screen concept). WPB size, speed and firepower, coupled with boarding skills inherent in CG units makes them ideal for security ops in vicinity of sea base...difficult for NCW force small boats, organic small boats (too small) and LCS (too large)...fills key niche.

Support for Sea Basing would not necessarily impact the Coast Guard's homeland security mission, but OPTEMPO for units supporting COCOM requirements would have to be closely managed to ensure an adequate balance with homeland security priorities.

We have heard some, but not much, on the USCG and other combined in close littoral assets in recent CENTOM OPS. Any insight into details?

Coast Guard Port Security Units (PSUs) have been continuously deployed to USCENTCOM's AOR since the inception of OIF to provide waterside security at strategic ports of debarkation. We also currently have six 110 foot Island Class patrol boats and their support element working under NAVCENT providing coastal sea control in the region. Finally, we have 4 Law Enforcement Detachments (LEDETS) embarked on USN ships to support maritime interdiction operations.

What is the vision of USCG participation in defense of the Sea Base? The rear bases and/or advanced land base? As part of Sea Shield?

In addition to the operations mentioned above, the Coast Guard provides a broader security benefit as part of a layered defense that starts at the SPOE and extends to the sea base itself. As seabasing reduces vulnerabilities associated with fixed SPOD infrastructure, adversaries will likely seek asymmetric advantages by disrupting SPOEs / SLOCs, in addition to anti-access / area denial (AA/AD) strategy currently evolving. Ports, Waterways and Coastal Security (PWCS) forces provide outload security for SPOEs to ensure uninterrupted logistics flow, one of key enablers for effective sea based operations.